

A

Friendly Address

TO FEMALES

RECOVERING FROM CHILDBED.

IN TWO PARTS.

INCLUDING

A COMPANION

To the Churching of Women,

AND A

FEW SUITABLE PRAYERS,

FOR

PRIVATE USE.

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BOUNDLE:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE writer of this little tract had long thought the state of females, recovering from Childbed, particularly adapted to the reception of religious impression. Yet neither in the list of the valuable tracts published by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, nor elsewhere, could he find any work addressed to this particular subject. He attempted therefore to supply the deficiency, originally with the sole view of benefiting the parishes committed to his care. The above general consideration however, seconded by the favourable opinion of some of his friends, has induced him to give it the chance of a wider circulation. It must be remembered that it is addressed particularly to the Poor, and therefore in some parts contains information and advice unnecessary to those in a higher situation of life. Its leading reflections, it is hoped, may be useful to every Mother.

Should there appear any probability of a demand for the purpose of charitable distribution, it will be re-printed in a cheaper form, and sold at three shillings per dozen.

A
Friendly Address,
TO
FEMALES
RECOVERING FROM CHILDBED.

PART FIRST.

ADVICE TO WOMEN BEFORE CHURCHING.

My dear friend and parishioner,

I TRUST you will believe that I have no other motive for now addressing you, than a desire to do you good. Though Providence has mercifully delivered you from the great pain and peril of Childbirth, you cannot have yet recovered your strength: your mind has been weakened as well as your body: it feels more tenderly than at other times; and is distressed, perhaps, by little things, which, at other times, it would hardly regard. Believe me, it is not my wish to give you unnecessary pain, nor to intrude upon the present tenderness of your heart with unprofitable sorrow. I would earnestly wish to cause as little sorrow, as can by any means produce the desired effect; I would

offer you a balm, which, though it may occasion a little present pain, shall, by the blessing of God, stanch every source of future suffering. So far from your present weakness making you unfit to listen to my friendly address, I should think it must have made you more fit than usual. I wish to speak to you of your duty towards God;—towards your Maker and Preserver: and the mercy, you have just experienced from His hand, must, I should imagine, have prepared you to listen to such a discourse with grateful attention. Yes: you cannot recall to your mind His late goodness towards you without the warmest gratitude. When you think upon the dreadful alarm, under which your heart lately sunk within you,—upon the great dangers with which you were closely beset; when you recollect how deeply you felt your own helplessness, and the helplessness of all the friends around your bed; and how sensible you were that God alone could give you relief; and that, if He did not give it speedily, your poor weakened frame must sink in the struggle; and how you trembled at the thought of many circumstances, which might take place, and in a moment end your life; and how your wearied spirit groaned under anguish, which it was scarcely able to endure; and how you looked up to God, and cried to Him for help in the bitterness of your affliction; when you call to mind how seasonably He heard your prayer;

how He supported your body under its sufferings ; how, in the hour of need, He visited your soul with a cheerfulness, which nothing human could bestow ; how, in the moment of Childbirth, He delivered you, as it were, from the pains of hell, and gave you a feeling of heavenly relief ; when you ponder on these mercies, which you have just experienced, and but for which you would not be here to be reminded of them : your heart must be callous indeed if it is not softened with the remembrance of such abundant goodness,—if it does not beat with the liveliest love towards Him, who has thus loved you. I am not wrong, I trust, in supposing that you have again and again thanked God in your heart for His great goodness to you. I would hope you have also frequently and fervently raised up your voice to Him, to express the gratitude of your heart. But is this all that is required of you ? No ; you will say : it is my duty to attend at Church, as soon as I am able, and to return my thanks and praises in the public congregation. Yes : this is your bounden duty : but it is not the only one remaining. I will however confine our present attention to this subject*. It is to be feared that many persons think the whole duty is performed by merely going to Church, sitting in a

* See in appendix, No. 6, a Prayer to be used on entering the Church.

particular seat, kneeling during the service of Churching, and making an offering to the Minister. I am sorry to say it is no uncommon thing to see females, who come to be Church-ed, sitting during the other part of divine service with perfect indifference, and as if they were not at all concerned in it: Yet they cannot but know they are at least as much concerned in every part of it, as any other person in the congregation, and, although they may not have sufficiently recovered their strength to kneel and stand, as others do, or ought to do, throughout the service, yet they can and ought to take part with their mind and heart in the whole of it. That part indeed, which belongs particularly to them, does demand *their* most particular attention. It is a very solemn composition: and I would earnestly recommend you to read it over carefully, again and again, before you come to Church. I will give you the service at length with such hints for your part as may be useful.

The Minister begins alone.

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance, and hath preserved you in the great danger of Childbirth; you shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God and say,

If you are not already kneeling, you will fall humbly upon your knees as soon as this prayer begins, saying to yourself some such words as: "May God
"be pleased to accept
"my hearty thanks for
"my safe deliverance
"through Jesus Christ."

The Minister then reads the 116 Psalm.

I am well pleased : that the Lord hath heard the voice of my prayer ; that he hath inclined his ear unto me : therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The snares of death compassed me round about : and the pains of hell gat hold upon me. I found trouble and heaviness, and I called upon the Name of the Lord : O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous : yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple : I was in misery, and He helped me. Turn again then unto thy rest, O my soul : for the Lord hath rewarded thee. And why ? thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord : in the land of the living. I believed, and therefore will I speak ; but I was sore troubled : I said in my haste, All men are liars. What reward shall I give unto the Lord : for all the benefits that he hath done unto me ? I will receive the

This Psalm is really offered up in your name, and is read by the Minister, in order to direct you what to say. It is therefore your part to repeat every verse aloud after him, word for word. It describes very beautifully the terrors of one suffering under heavy bodily affliction, the merciful deliverance of God, the natural feelings of thankfulness for such mercies, and a grateful resolution to make a public acknowledgment of them in the house of the Lord. You have lately suffered under these terrors : you have experienced these mercies : you have, I trust, these feelings of thankfulness : and you have now come into the Lord's house, to return your public thanks. You will therefore join with your whole heart and voice in every verse.

cup of salvation : and call upon the Name of the Lord. I will pay my vows now in the presence of all his people : in the courts of the Lord's house, even in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord.

Glory be to the Father, &c.
As it was in the beginning, &c.

Or perhaps the Minister will read Psalm the 127th.

Except the Lord build the house : their labour is but lost that build it. Except the Lord keep the city : the watchman waketh but in vain. It is but lost labour that ye haste to rise up early and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness : for so he giveth his beloved sleep. Lo, children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage that cometh of the Lord. Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant : even so are young children. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them : they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.

This Psalm describes the great blessing of having a large family. It teaches therefore the poorest parents not to murmur under the expense, which every addition to their children causes, but to look upon them as the gift of God, who, if they are properly trained, may live to be a blessing to them in their latter days. You do, I am sure, regard your poor little helpless infant with the tenderest affection, and it would give you real pain to have it taken from you. You will therefore heartily join in this thanksgiving, as in the former, repeating every verse after the Minister.

Glory be to the Father, &c.
As it was in the beginning, &c.

The Minister next says,

Let us pray.

That is, he calls upon you and all the congregation, to join with him in solemn prayer. He then proceeds.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

And you will readily reply,

Christ, have mercy upon us,

The Minister rejoins,

Lord, have mercy upon us.

And then reads the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

This prayer you will of course repeat after the Minister. You know that it is proper for every occasion, and should continually form a part of our addresses to God.

The Minister says,

O Lord, save this woman thy servant.

Here you find yourself pointed out as the particular object of the prayers of the Minister and the congregation around you. The remainder of the service concerns you alone: the danger, from which you have been delivered, is so great, and the mercy of God in delivering you, so adorable, that all your friends and neighbours, every one in the Church, are expected to join with you in prayer and thanksgiving on your account. There is something very awful in this consideration: that you are now, in the face of so many persons offering up praises for blessings, which concern scarcely any one but yourself, and that they are adding their prayers to yours for grace, to enable you to profit by them. And this thought cannot fail to make you declare aloud your faith in your merciful Father, by saying,

Who putteth her trust in thee.

The Minister prays,

Be thou to her a strong tower,

To which you reply,

From the face of her enemy.

The Minister says,

Lord, hear our prayer.

And you rejoin,

And let our cry come unto thee.

The Minister again awakens the attention of the congregation by saying,

Let us pray.

And proceeds to offer up the following solemn thanksgiving and prayer in your behalf,

O Almighty God, we give thee humble thanks, for that thou hast vouchsafed to deliver this woman, thy servant, from the great pain and peril of Childbirth; Grant we beseech thee, most merciful Father, that she, through thy help, may both faithfully live and walk according to thy will, in this life present: and also may be partaker of everlasting glory in the life to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This prayer belongs to the congregation. Though it is not intended for you to repeat it after the Minister, you will heartily apply it to yourself, as the Minister proceeds: for you cannot but be thankful, and, I trust, you do sincerely desire to live according to God's will and to partake of life everlasting. From the bottom of your heart therefore you will add, Amen, that is, May this prayer be granted.

With this supplication the immediate service of Churching concludes. The Prayer Book tells you afterwards, that if there be a holy Communion, it is convenient (that is, proper) that

you receive it. Perhaps this opportunity may not often occur on the day of your Churching : perhaps also you may be in too weak a state, to go properly through that solemn rite at present. I will not therefore speak upon that subject now : but I will just call your attention to the duty of now bringing up your child to be Christened. If it has not already been privately baptized, I hardly need admonish you to have it baptized publicly : for I am happy to say, I never yet met with a Mother, who could bear the idea of her Child going entirely without baptism. I believe no one wishes to make, or leave, her Child a heathen, in the midst of Christians. But when their Children have been privately baptized, many persons defer bringing them to Church to be Christened, sometimes for many years ; and some perhaps are never received into the Church at all. This is a shocking neglect on the part of Parents. You will remember, that it is merely to accommodate you, or for fear of your Child dying without baptism, that the Minister does ever privately baptize him, and that he then does not go through the whole of the holy rite of baptism, but only that part, which is essential to his becoming a Christian, in fact only through the first part of it,—that another part remains to be performed in the Church. And this is a very important part : for then you not only have your child

acknowledged as a Christian in the sight of the congregation : you not only have many excellent prayers offered up in his behalf, but you have also three of your friends bound as Godfathers and Godmothers to provide as far as they can for the welfare of his soul. So that if you negligently defer this part of baptism, you risk the eternal interests of your child ; Surely you would rather have the assistance of three of your friends to train him in the right way, than have the care of him resting only on yourself and his father, both of whom it may please Providence to remove before he is of an age to direct himself. It is not now the time to speak at length upon the Sacrament of Baptism, or I might shew how much it is the duty of all persons to undertake these offices of Godfathers and Godmothers for our friends and neighbours, and not only to undertake them readily, but to perform them conscientiously. It is not however my present business : and besides you may read them very well enforced in a little book which you may easily procure, intitled, “A serious address to Godfathers and Godmothers*.” I would however just remind you, that it is contrary to the rules of our Church that any Parent should be admitted to answer as Godfather or Godmother for his or her own child, and you ought always therefore to provide three friends

* It is one of the Tracts published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

to take that office, two Godfathers and one Godmother for a boy, two Godmothers and one Godfather for a girl, and if you come without three such sureties, besides yourselves, you must not be offended if the Minister refuses to proceed in the service, He is ordered to do so by the 29th Canon of the Church. Before leaving the Church, you will offer up some such prayers as I have given in the Appendix No. 7.

Part Second.

ADVICE TO WOMEN AFTER CHURCHING.

My dear friend and parishioner,

You have, I hope, read over the first part of my address with serious attention. I endeavoured in that to impress upon you a deep sense of the great mercy of God in delivering you from the pain and peril of Childbirth, and an earnest desire to make all the return in your power. As yet you have been able to do little of this : you have been too weak to do much : the care of your infant has occupied almost all your time : but you have now, I trust, almost recovered your strength and are anxious to do

more. All that you have hitherto done in respect to your duty towards God has been to thank Him continually in private for his goodness to you, to pray to him for a continuance of it, to make resolutions of serving him more truly, and to offer your thanksgivings publicly in the Church, bringing at the same time your infant to be Christened. You have done all this, I hope, sincerely and heartily, but I would beg of you now to bestow half an hour on examining yourself,—on examining whether your feelings of gratitude are as lively as when you were first relieved. As lively, or even more lively, they ought to be ; for mercy has been added to mercy every day since. The greatest of all earthly mercies was then indeed vouchsafed to you : your poor frame was racked and tortured with agony that threatened your very life : you groaned under the bitter pangs of travail : In that moment you would have given the wealth of Kings, had you possessed it, for deliverance from your sufferings. Your gracious Father vouchsafed you a deliverance—a joyful deliverance : He turned your sorrow into gladness, your tears into smiles, your bitter lamentations into songs of joy. Well might you vow that you would never again forget Him, who had so mercifully regarded you. And have not other mercies been vouchsafed ? Has not the same hand, that supported you in the hour of anguish, raised you from the bed of weakness, and, every day,

added to your strength? Was it not entirely by his mercy that you have been enabled to walk up to his temple, to return your thanks in the congregation of the people? Have you not had many comforts during your sickness, for which you have reason to be truly thankful?—comforts, which your own heart will suggest to you better than I can. The question is, Do you feel as lively a sense of the tender mercies of God, as you ought to feel,—as you really *did* feel in the beginning of your confinement? I would willingly hope that this is the case, and that you are still as desirous as ever of making all the return in your power. Now the only return you can make, is by giving up yourself to the service of God. I do not mean that you are on any account to neglect your duty to your husband and family. It is never necessary to do this, in order to serve God. Every thing, that your family requires, may be well attended too, and yet you may find time to think often and seriously upon the great goodness of God, and your own unworthiness, to bless Him every morning and evening for His mercies, and to pray that He will continue them both to your body and soul, and that He will give you grace to work out your salvation through the merits of your Saviour, Jesus Christ. If you are able to read too, you may always find leisure to study that most precious of all books, that best of all guides, the holy Bible. I am not now addressing you

with an intention to explain the whole of your duty in detail. One indispensable part of it, however, I must point out. It is that, which your prayer book recommended in the service of Churching. It told you it was proper you should receive the holy Communion. Certainly you cannot be serving God truly, if you neglect this blessed Sacrament of the body and blood of His beloved Son, who died for you. If you have any of those religious feelings, which I trust you have ; if you have not indeed forgotten the mercy, you have experienced ; you will take the very first opportunity of going to the Holy Table, and there devoting yourself, your soul and body, to your Lord and Master. You can I think, have no excuse to offer for not receiving it : if you have, let me recommend you to read a Tract on this subject, published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, entitled, “an Essay on the holy Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper”, by Peter Waldo Esq. I must not now dwell on the subject. My present object is only to rivet in your heart a resolution henceforward to live unto that God, who has so lately preserved your life, and to give a few hints more particularly connected with your present situation, I proceed to the latter, and will shew how naturally it may suggest—*First*, the care of your own soul—*Secondly*, the care of the soul of your child—*Thirdly*, the care of the soul of your husband.

First. I am to speak of the care of your own soul. I must once more beg you to think of the severe pains, you have lately undergone. Those dreadful pains were entailed upon your sex by the sinfulness of your first mother. It was part of the original curse. She disobeyed her God, and He pronounced the stern sentence, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception : in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children". You can too feelingly tell how strictly this sentence has been executed. Think then how hateful sin must be in the eyes of God, when He thus visits it with severe punishment from generation to generation. You have had a bitter taste of the fruits of sin in your body : beware lest you taste it still more bitterly in your soul. You have felt what awful power God possesses of inflicting pain : you felt it for a few hours, and you shudder at the recollection of it. This was pain of the body. Imagine those sufferings extended to the soul, whose feelings are infinitely more acute, and continuing, not merely hour after hour, but day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, ages after ages, without abatement, and without hope of abatement ; and say if it be not worth your while to avoid so dreadful a visitation. You think within yourself that the racking pain, which you endured, could not possibly continue for any great length of time, since your weak body would sink under it, and all sensation

would be lost in death. But the soul can never be destroyed : it may endure an eternity of torment and be no nearer dissolution than at first. Shall we say that this adds a double point to the sting of death? Alas! it multiplies its terrors ten thousand times, shutting out every ray of hope and locking up all in unutterable horror. It is almost intolerable to think of it : what must it be to endure it? Would the labour of the whole of your present life be ill employed in warding off the everlasting anguish of life to come? As then you lately prayed for mercy to your perishable body, have now some mercy on your imperishable soul. It is in your own hands. Your Saviour is ready to heal all its wounds, to deliver it from all its sufferings, to give it peace and joy everlasting, if you will apply to Him in faith, and walk according to his holy laws. Surely here is motive sufficient to turn you from the service of the world to the service of God : to induce you to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Thus then you are admonished by your bodily sufferings, to attend to the care of your soul.

Secondly. I am to speak of the care of the soul of your child. When you had first revived from the immediate pains of Childbirth, with what anxiety did you regard the fruit of your womb! How wistfully did you inquire, if it was perfect in its bodily form! if it bore the promise of bodily health! with what tender as-

sidity have you since ministered to all its wants and weaknesses ! with what never-sleeping affection have you supplied to it a mother's food ! and as it grows up, how fondly will you watch over its growing powers, and do all you can to secure to it the full enjoyment of health and strength ! Nature tells you that in doing this, you are doing no more than a mother's duty. But reason and religion will tell you, that this is but a part of the duty of a parent. Your child has a soul as well as a body—a soul, which will last for ever and ever after the poor body has become the food of worms. Can you then be so anxious to provide for that which lasteth so short a time and neglect that which never dies ? At present indeed you can do nothing for the soul of your infant, except offering up a mother's prayers to God for its welfare : but the task of attending to it will begin earlier than you are perhaps aware. It is not my present business to describe the whole method of training up a child in the way that he should go : but I will point out a few particulars. Begin then very early,—as soon as your child can at all understand your meaning,—to teach him to give up his own will to yours. By indulging a child as far as you can, in every thing, for which it cries, you really do not give it more pleasure, than if you indulged it only when it was proper, (for children very soon

learn to be content without those things, which they cannot get by crying,) and you certainly give yourself a great deal of present trouble. But, what is far worse, you foster a habit of constantly craving after things, which it ought not to have, and of being unable to bear disappointment without great discontent. Now you know contentedness is not only a qualification, which very much smooths our passage through life, but is also the necessary ornament of a Christian. Next, check the very first beginning of deceit in your child. Let your child see that you correct him in love : but still correct with firmness, and, if needful, with severity, every attempt to deceive you. Never let a lie pass unpunished. Treat other vices, as an inclination to cheat, to purloin, to use bad language &c. with the same resolution. Again, give your child as early as possible, a notion of Almighty God. Teach him to consider God, as seeing every thing he does, and, at some time or other, rewarding every good action and punishing every bad one. Regularly train him to say a simple prayer to God, morning and evening : make him punctually and unfailingly, every week attend the service of the Church, and in every way keep the sabbath holy. Keep him on that day, and as far as possible, on every other, from the company of idle and wicked boys. Lastly, If it be by any means in your

power, send him to a school, where he may learn to read : and be careful in sending him regularly. The forming of regular habits is of the greatest consequence. It may sometimes occasion you a little inconvenience, or cause you a little expense. Let not this deter you : if you lose a sixpence ; remember it is a sixpence laid out for the benefit of your child's soul. If this consideration dose not reconcile you to it, nothing, that I can say, will. In a word, do all, that you can, to put your child under the guidance of the gospel : give him a religious turn, and you give him a treasure of more worth than thousands of Gold and Silver.

Thirdly. I am to speak of the care of your husband's soul : which I shall do on the supposition that he himself is paying little attention to it. Who was the person to whom you most fondly looked for sympathy and congratulation, as you raised your drooping head from the bed of labour ? Whom did you wish first to smile upon your infant ? Was it not he, to whom it was endeared by the same ties as to yourself,—its Father ? He, who had provided for your comfort, as far as possible, during your hour of distress, and who is to provide for the support of both of you in future ? Your husband's present life is bound up with yours. As long as you both live, you must, in a great measure,

have the same cares, the same fears, the same joys, the same sorrows. Is there any pleasure in this life that you can enjoy, of which you would not wish your husband to have a share? I am persuaded there is not. Can you then be unconcerned and indifferent, as to whether he shall share in the happiness, which I trust you are seeking for yourself in the life to come? Would it not grieve you on the bed of death, even, if you were assured, that you were about to enter into the joys of heaven, to think that the soul of your wretched husband was doomed to the miseries of hell? You feel it to be your duty to do all in your power for his earthly comfort. If he suffers under distress of mind, you share in his distress: if he lies upon the bed of sickness, you watch by his side, to minister to his wants: you give up all the business of the day, and all the repose of night, to attendance upon his affliction. It would afford you no pleasure to mix with the most joyous company, and to be in the midst of the most delightful amusements, if you had left at home your poor husband stretched as it were upon a couch of fire, with parched tongue, and burning cheeks, and glazed eyes, crying, under the agony of devouring fever, for refreshment which no one was near to afford. The very thought of enjoyment under such circumstances fills you with horror. And does it not then interfere with the hope of

your happiness in heaven, to think that while you should be lying in the bosom of Abraham, your wretched husband in unutterable anguish, should in vain be imploring, that you might be sent to dip the tip of your finger in water and cool his tongue, under the torments of that flame? In that hour you are told it will be too late to give the least relief: there will then be a great gulf fixed, which will for ever divide you. But it is not yet too late: that dreadful gulf is not yet fixed: it is yet in your power not only to save your own soul, but, very possibly, by the blessing of God, to save the soul of your husband. You think otherwise, perhaps, because, in general, your husband follows his inclination without asking or taking your advice. It may be so in common affairs: but, believe me, in the business of religion, you have more influence than you are aware of. You can do nothing with him by force: you cannot drive him into religious habits: but there are many ways by which you may lead him into them. Shew him first how lovely Religion is: let him see how kind it makes you towards himself, your children, your neighbours; how cheerful it makes you under the petty crosses of life, how contented under its more serious troubles, how resigned under its deepest afflictions. Shew him the great comfort of a trust in Providence for the happiness of this world, and of faith in

your Saviour for happiness in the world to come. Let him see what satisfaction you derive from punctually attending to your devotions in public and private. Be constantly on the watch for an opportunity of awakening him to a sense of religious duty and the importance of preparing for another world ; and use every opportunity with the mildness of persuasion, not with the harshness of rebuke. In short, strive as heartily and as dexterously to make him religious, as you would to obtain any earthly favour from him, and I have little doubt but you will in time succeed. I shall be very happy if in supposing your husband to need being thus drawn into Religion, I have been mistaken. I shall be most happy if he is himself thoroughly religious, striving constantly to preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, and to partake of the mercies of redemption by Jesus Christ. You will then have only to assist each other in your holy course, and in training up your children to walk in the same blessed path. Blessed indeed you will have reason to call that path, which leads to unruffled peace on earth and to everlasting happiness in Heaven ;—which will gain you the respect and good-will of men below, and the approbation of God above. Think how delightful it will be to you, surrounded by your Husband and Children, to be called to the right hand of your Sa-

viour, at the day of Judgment, and to hear from Him these joyful words: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Beseeching you to make this reflection the companion of your bosom,

I am,

Your affectionate friend and Pastor,

EDWARD SWATMAN.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

** A PRAYER FOR A SICK WOMAN THAT IS WITH
CHILD.*

O GOD, the Help of all that put their trust in thee, the support of the weak, and the relief of the needy ; Look down with pity upon thy servant, who am at best but a weak and helpless creature, but much more so now in my present condition when thou hast added weakness to weakness, and made me to travail with much sickness, together with the burden of child bearing. O Lord, be thou graciously pleased to proportion thy strength to my weakness, and as pains and sorrow take hold upon me, inspire me with fresh vigour and courage to rely upon thee, my only support in time of need, and the rock of my salvation. Let me not be disquieted with the fear of any evil, since none can happen unto me without thy permission : but give me grace, patiently, to resign myself to thy blessed will in all things, who knowest what is best for me, and will lay no more upon me, I trust, than thou wilt enable me to bear. Bring strength, O Lord, out of weakness, and health out of sickness ; and make me in thy good time a joyful mother of a hopeful child, which may do good in its generation, and be an

* This and the following prayers are in a great measure compiled.

instrument of thy glory here and a blessed inhabitant of thy heavenly kingdom hereafter. O gracious God listen to my prayer, I beseech thee in the name and for the sake of my blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

No. 2.

A PRAYER ON THE NEAR APPROACH OF LABOUR.

O ALMIGHTY Lord God, who bringest to the birth and giveth strength to bring forth, shew favour, I beseech thee to thy servant in the time of my need and distress, and be not far from me now that trouble is nigh, and fear presses heavily upon my soul. Give comfort to me and refresh my spirits with thy heavenly aid. O mitigate my pangs and make them tolerable to me, and support and relieve me under the pains and pressure that are so grievous to be borne. Grant me O Lord, a timely, safe, and happy deliverance of the offspring with which I travail, that I may see the fruit of my womb with such comfort and joy, as may make me forget my past anguish and sorrow, and with a truly thankful heart give thee the glory of thy mercy. Whatever may be thy will, give me grace to meet it with a composed mind and a stedfast trust in thy never-failing goodness, and grant that whether I live, I may live unto thee, or whether I die, I may die unto thee, through Jesus Christ, my Lord and my Redeemer. Amen.

No. 3.

*EJACULATIONS, ANY OF WHICH MAY BE REPEATED
DURING THE HOUR OF LABOUR.*

IN thee, O Lord, have I put my trust : let me not be put to confusion : but rid me and deliver me in thy righteousness : incline thine ear unto me, and save me. Psalm lxxi. 1.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord ; for I am weak : O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed : my soul also is sore troubled : but, Lord, how long wilt thou punish me ? Turn thee, O Lord and deliver my soul : O save me for thy mercy's sake. Psalm vi. 2, 3, 4.

Thou art He that took me out of my mother's womb : thou wast my hope, when I hanged yet upon my mother's breasts. I have been left unto thee ever since I was born. Thou art my God even from my mother's womb. O go not from me, for trouble is hard at hand, and there is none to help me. Psalm xxii. 9, 10, 11.

Turn thee unto me and have mercy upon me : for I am desolate and in misery. The sorrows of my heart are enlarged. O bring me out of my troubles. Look upon my adversity and misery : and forgive me all my sin. Psalm xxv. 16, 17, 18.

O hide not thou thy face from me, nor cast thy servant away in displeasure. Thou hast been my succour : leave me not : neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. Psalm xxvii. 9.

My strength is dried up like a potsherd and my tongue cleaveth to my gums : but be not far from me, O Lord : thou art my succour : haste thee to help me. Psalm xxii. 15, 19.

Comfort the soul of thy servant : for in thee O Lord do I lift up my soul : for thou art good and gracious, and of great mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Psalm lxxxvi. 4, 5.

No. 4.

*EJACULATIONS, ANY OF WHICH MAY BE REPEATED
ON RECOVERING FROM THE PAINS OF LABOUR.*

O LORD, our governor, how excellent is thy name in all the world : thou that hast set up thy glory above the heavens. What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him. Psalm viii. 1, 4.

I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, with my whole heart : I will speak of thy marvellous works : I will be glad and rejoice in thee : yea my songs will I make of thy name, O thou most Highest. Psalm ix. 1, 2.

The Lord is my strength and my shield : my heart hath trusted in Him and I am helped : therefore my heart danceth for joy, and in my song will I praise Him. Psalm xxviii. 7.

Who is like unto the Lord our God that hath his dwelling so high and yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven and earth ? He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Psalm cxiii. 5, 6, 9.

The Lord liveth and blessed be my strong helper ; and praised be the God of my salvation. Psalm xviii. 46.

Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy : thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness. Psalm xxx. 11.

I sought the Lord and He heard me : yea, He delivered me out of all my fear. Psalm xxxiv. 4.

I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the people, and I will sing unto thee among the nations : for the greatness of thy mercy reacheth unto the Heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. Psalm lvii. 9, 10.

No. 5.

*A FORM OF THANKSGIVING FOR A SAFE DELIVER-
ANCE.*

O MOST merciful and gracious God, thou fountain of all mercy and blessing, thou hast opened the hand of thy mercy to fill me with blessings and the sweet effects of thy loving-kindness : thou feedest us like a shepherd, thou governest us as a king, thou bearest us in thy arms like a nurse, thou coverest us under the shelter of thy wings, thou waketh for us as a watchman, thou lovest us as a Parent and art exceeding

merciful to all that fear thee. And now, O Lord, thou hast added this great blessing of deliverance from the pains and perils of childbirth. It was thy hand and the help of thy mercy that relieved me : the waters of affliction had drowned me, and the stream had gone over my soul, if the spirit of the Lord had not saved me. Unto thee, O Lord, I ascribe the pain of my redemption. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy : for thou hast considered my trouble and hast known my soul in adversity. As thou hast graciously relieved my body, so also enlarge my heart with thankfulness and fill my mouth with praises, that my duty and return to thee may be as great as my need of mercy is, and let thy favour and loving-kindness endure for ever upon thy servant : and grant what thou hast sown in mercy, may spring up in duty : and let thy grace so strengthen my purposes that I may sin no more, but may henceforth strive with my whole heart and mind and soul, to render to thee such a service as thou mayest be pleased to accept for the sake of my dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

If the Child be living this may be added.

Preserve my tender infant, O Father of mercies, and let its own weakness commend it to thy care. Keep it in health and safety, and, as it increases in years and stature, let it increase in wisdom and in thy fear, that so it may prove a blessing to its parents, and finally itself inherit that blessing which thou hast promised to thy faithful servants through the merits of our redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

No. 6. A PRAYER

TO BE PRIVATELY OFFERED ON FIRST ENTERING
THE CHURCH, TO RETURN THANKS.

O GRACIOUS God, I am now about to return thanks to thee in the congregation for the great mercies thou hast vouch-

safed to me. Give me grace, I beseech thee, to feel deeply in my breast that which I utter with my lips, and be mercifully pleased to accept my humble thanksgiving for the sake of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

NO. 7. *A PRAYER*

*TO BE PRIVATELY OFFERED BEFORE LEAVING THE
CHURCH AFTER RETURNING PUBLIC THANKS.*

GRANT, O merciful Father, that I may ever retain a deep sense of that adorable goodness for which I have this day returned my humble thanks and praises, and that I may so use this and all thy other mercies, as finally to be made a partaker of thy heavenly blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FINIS.



THE PREPARATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

PARISH CHURCH OF ST. JAMES, WESTMINSTER,

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 1825.

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THE PREPARATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

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PARISH CHURCH OF ST. JAMES, WESTMINSTER,

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 1825.

BEING THE SUNDAY FOLLOWING THE FUNERAL

OF

THE VERY REVEREND GERRARD ANDREWES, D.D.

LATE DEAN OF CANTERBURY, AND RECTOR OF THAT PARISH.

BY EDWARD SMEDLEY, JUN. A.M.

ALTERNATE MORNING PREACHER AT THE CHURCH OF
ST. JAMES, WESTMINSTER.

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MDCCCXXV.



IF the publication of the following Sermon had been, in the slightest degree, contemplated at the time in which it was put together, (although novelty is scarcely to be expected on a subject which more or less must have occupied the thoughts of every human being for above six thousand years,) I might, perhaps, have been more scrupulous in adopting, in the first portion, such materials as recollection suggested to be applicable to my purpose. In the latter portion, the character which I have attempted to sketch was studied under the privilege of a long, familiar, and affectionate friendship, not of one generation only : and the pride which it is but natural that I should feel in making this statement, must be accepted, jointly with the request of those who had a right to expect acquiescence, as an excuse for the present intrusion on the public.

EDWARD SMEDLEY.

Wandsworth, June 14, 1825.

A SERMON.

LUKE XIV. 17.

COME; FOR ALL THINGS ARE NOW READY.

THE invitation conveyed by these words to the guests whom the King, in the Parable, asked to his marriage supper, was refused on the most light and frivolous excuses. It was even treated with contempt; one man went to his farm, another to his merchandise, and the feast was deserted by all those who were bidden.

It must be quite unnecessary to remind you that this Parable was intended to illustrate the stubbornness of the Jews in rejecting the Gospel. The Law and the Prophets had amply prepared that hard-hearted and rebellious people for the invitation which Jesus himself was to dispense *when all things were ready*; but they were deaf to the call; and their consequent punishment has been that they have been delivered over to their own infidelity and perverseness, and left, as they even at present remain, a fearful monument to all mankind. "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

A like invitation is still issued to each of us, and, it may be feared, too often with equal want of success. We are called upon, not only to profess a faith in Christ, (for this were little,) but to prove that we are really Christians, by acting up to that profession. We are bidden to the supper, and we are expected to appear at it clad in a wedding garment ; or, in other words, which cannot be mistaken, if we hope to enter into Heaven hereafter, we are so to prepare ourselves here, that, when we stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, our good works, springing from faith in Him, may be pleaded in our behalf ; which, although of themselves they cannot put away our sins, nevertheless, after our justification by His righteousness, may become pleasing to God, and thus far may contribute to the attainment of our reward.

Come ; for all things are ready, is the summons then which every man must expect, whenever his course in this life is completed. But, let us ask, are *all* things ready ? There can be no doubt that the tribunal of God is ready ; that the Books are ready in which is written whatsoever we have done, according to our works ; that another Book, namely, the Book of Life, is opened and ready, in which whosoever's name is not found written, he shall be east into the lake of fire. Eternity, moreover is ready, and the abodes which are to receive us without end. But are *we* also ready ? are our loins girded, and our lamps burning,

and are we awake and watching to go forth and meet the bridegroom ?

Ask the sensual, the avaricious, the ambitious, or even the thoughtless man, and his reply cannot fail to be in the negative. These are aliens from Heaven and strangers to God ; they have wandered from the true road which leads them to their abiding city ; and, like the Prodigal, they have taken their journey into a far country, where they cleave to every vanity. No man who is beset by any sin, in which he permits himself habitual indulgence, is willing to part from it, and therefore no such man can be ready to go where Sin cannot enter. If he loves the world, his treasure is in the world, and where his treasure is, there will be his heart also. Death alone has no place in his thoughts ; for though day uttereth knowledge to day, though the grave yawns widely on every side, and pilgrims fall into it every hour before his eyes, though the living and the departed, with countless voices, speak loudly to him of mortality, he endeavours to banish from his meditations that which he cannot disbelieve, and he persists in living on as if he should never die ; till, perhaps, threescore years and ten creep silently by, and find him still measuring future projects, anticipating pleasures to come, creating that which shall never have being, and building that which himself shall never possess. So that when in the end he is called to the presence of him who, if he would but let him, would be his Father, he

continues to cling to the earthly tabernacle which his own hands have raised here, and framing un-numbered excuses (which cannot be received) for longer tarrying in the flesh ; he not only prays with David to be spared a little ; but, if it were in his own power, he would never go hence.*

It must be confessed, that a dread of Death, to a certain extent, is natural ; and it is plain that it is implanted in us for the wisest purposes. Yet there are good reasons, and those not a few, which it might be thought should amply reconcile us to its approach, let it come at what season it may. We may be told that this is a common theme and an exhausted argument ; and how indeed should it be otherwise ? For what is more common than Death ? Yet, however common it may be, no lesson is more readily forgotten. Any occasion, therefore, which refreshes our recollection of it, will not be without its advantage.

Admitting that Death was inflicted in the first instance as a punishment, and that as a punishment, therefore, it cannot be otherwise than dreaded ; yet, if we steadfastly and thoroughly believed the declarations of our Saviour, we should feel that its original terrors are much abated ; and that the victory which Christ's sacrifice has won over Sin is no less a victory over the grave. We are armed against its

* Farrington.

attacks, by an assurance that it is the gate of immortality ; and that bitter sentence, the curse of which was mitigated to Adam by no more than an obscure and figurative promise of future good, is read by us in plain and distinct terms as a title to happiness, if we have laboured to deserve it, instead of a decree of condemnation.

And this knowledge must be assumed in brief, as the only real antidote to the poison which the fear of dissolution would otherwise instil into our minds, whenever they reverted to its certainty and necessity. The motives and reasons which Heathenism suggested to reconcile mankind to their inevitable destiny, however ingeniously conceived, however eloquently propounded, nevertheless, were manifestly inadequate to the purposes for which they were designed. For, even in the wisest and most pious of their speculative writers, we find nothing more on this subject, than an occasional glimmering of scanty and fugitive light, and a *desire* rather than a *hope* of a future state. Life, said some of these men, may be full of troubles and miseries ; yet, even on the stake and in tortures, Life must be preferable to Death*—and for this reason: Life, at the worst, is something ; Death, according to this creed, is a surrender of every thing. Call it what you will, a

* Vita dum superest, bene est.

Hanc mihi, vel acutâ

Si sedeam cruce, sustine.

MÆCENAS, *apud Senec. Epist. ci.*

debt owing to Nature, a soothing forgetfulness and repose, a sleep, a harbour, a haven, a return to the same unconseiousness in which some have supposed the soul to languish before our birth—connect it with all possible ideas of passiveness and tranquillity which language can afford ;—still, if this Life be all, you never can divest Death of that dreary void, that cheerless annihilation, which, to Beings who have once possessed the powers of Reason, is, perhaps, more appalling than a continuance of existence, even under pain itself.

But now give the certainty of another world ; and let that world be, what without absurdity it cannot but be, a state of retribution and of adjustment for the inequalities of this ; and observe how the question stands. Every argument which the glowing language of the Heathen Sages has offered, to persuade mankind to meet the blow of Death without reluctance, assumes a virtue and a vigour before unknown to it ; and if you permit me to add the truths which Christianity has authoritatively proclaimed, I desire no better premises upon which to commence, than the conjectures which Philosophy has hazarded.

For the Christian also believes, that Death is a tribute which he owes to God ; but he knows that in discharging this tribute, his Saviour has enabled him to pay, at the same time, the incalculably heavier debt which has been imposed upon him at his birth, by Sin ; Death

may be a sleep; but if it be so, it is a sleep from which we shall arise, after a short time, to an everlasting wakefulness of joy. It is, in truth, a harbour and a haven of repose; it is a return, not, however, to forgetfulness and non-existence, but to the bosom of an affectionate Father, who, both in wisdom and in mercy, has devised this surest passage by which his children may come unto him.

Pass but this barrier, which separates the visible from the invisible world, and the body of Sin is destroyed; temptation is no more; sorrow and grief have ceased to be; we are with God, we are in his presence and in his likeness. That infinite and insatiable capacity, that restless longing of the mind, which here on earth never receives full content, there shall have full measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over. The hunger of the soul, which certainly was not planted in us for no purpose, there shall be allayed. The phantasms and apparitions which have fled from us while we chased them, below, there shall be changed into realities; and that which we have seen here but in a glass darkly, there shall be fully exhibited to us face to face.

It can never be contended, that these glorious hopes may temper the sufferings of such as die in Christ, but that they fail to afford consolation to the mourners who survive. If so, our sorrow is indeed most selfish. Is it nothing, that one whom we love has passed the storms and

tempests of his road, and is now set down in safety at his journey's end? Would we call him back from his joy, and keep him still under the yoke and harrow of the flesh? Do we forget the certainty of eternal re-union? Weep for those who are departed, but weep not as men without hope. Religion permits our tears, they are a holy offering which Nature may draw; but Religion, at the same time, brings in Faith and Hope to wipe them away.*

These, however, are points on which I would not appear too speculative, and, before I conclude, I would wish, therefore, to offer you a few words which may affect our practice; and to show you, in a more lively form than that of dry and abstract precept, what is the preparation for death of a good and faithful servant of the Lord. In doing this, I will endeavour to frame a rapid sketch of the leading features of such a character; and, since however large the field may be in which *every* Christian is appointed to labour, none most assuredly is so large as that which is entrusted to the culture of a Minister of the Gospel; (for he has unusual responsibility attached to his office, and his duty is to save not only himself but those also who hear him :) it is under this form that I will lay before you my portrait.

First, then, such a man as this, remembering

* Farrington.

that his light is set upon a hill, will educate himself in the school of Christ, to be an example to those who see him, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. He will fashion his private life and manners so as to bear a more curious inspection than those of other men, in the exercise of that round of social and domestic duties, in which no man ought to be wanting. He will be distinguished as a tender husband, as an affectionate and watchful parent, as a kind master, as a zealous and constant friend, as a just and upright citizen. Secretly he will busy himself in the whole labour of love, by visiting the sick and needy, by consoling the broken-hearted, by healing strifes, by bearing the message of peace, by instructing those who are in darkness, by awakening those who are dead to God, and by turning the sinner from the error of his way. Whenever demands are made upon his bounty, his utmost means will be his only limit of giving; yet he will give with such nice precaution and so careful an avoidance of ostentation, that, until his secret is betrayed by the great good which he has worked, God and his own right hand will be the only witnesses of his benevolence. Again, in the practice of this virtue, he will be guided by a sobriety of judgment, which readily distinguishes between such plans as can be rendered effective, and such as can only furnish themes for declamation; between the enduring and well-compacted edifice, which is founded upon

a rock, for ages, and the baseless, though specious pile, heaped together from discordant materials, and falling to pieces after a momentary display. So also, by the sincere and profound attachment which he cherishes to that pure form of Religion of which he is an ordained Minister, he will be preserved from lending himself, in any way, as a dupe to the insidious Schismatic, or as a fellow visionary with the insane Enthusiast. Openly, he will take heed that his good be not evil spoken of; he will provide things honest in the sight of all men; and by avoiding much which, although indifferent in itself, might possibly be made to wear the appearance of ill by the malicious or the scorner, he will, for the most part, escape giving offence to those who are ever ready to take offence, and who are vigilant to catch at occasions for scandal. Punctual and diligent in the transaction of such temporal concerns as fall to his charge, he will remember, that part of the work which God has given us to do in this life, is to *live* in it; that Religion mainly consists in action; and that, after all, he is the best servant who does most service. On the same principles, although profoundly imbued with reverence for God, and regarding the vital truths of the Gospel with that awe which every man must feel who has studied to understand and to appreciate them, he will by no means think that severity and seclusion are necessary companions to piety, nor that a gloomy

countenance is the surest proof of sincere devotion. On the contrary, he will not be less prepared to rejoice with those who rejoice, than to weep with those who weep; and he will make Religion attractive to many, who otherwise would have regarded her as crabbed, austere and melancholy, by showing, in his own person, that Holiness and Cheerfulness are not forbidden to walk hand in hand.

Follow him now to his public duties, and observe him when he divides the word of God, and speaks under the authority of his commission from his Saviour. Earnest, simple, and impressive, sincere, persuasive, and eloquent, he will not covet popularity by exhibiting gaudy flourishes and misplaced ornaments, but reputation will follow him, uncourted, through his sound, sober, and practical teaching. Out of his stores, both new and old, he will bring forth copious treasures to illustrate or explain the Truth as it is in Jesus. In urging the beauty and the necessity of a strict performance of moral duties, he will forcibly direct the thoughts of his flock to the source from which these duties should spring, in order that they may be sanctified; and, as ambassador for Christ, he will beseech men, in His stead, to be reconciled to God. Hence a humble reliance on the merits of the Redeemer, and a fervent application for the spiritual aid of the Comforter, will be the doctrines to which he never will omit to point, as affording the only sure methods of sal-

vation. In uncovering the deformity of sin, he will always be willing, if possible, to seek the extenuation of the sinner; and, wherever it is necessary to awaken a due sense of guilt, without compromising the purity or the justice of the Almighty, without merging the terrors of the Lord in his mercy, his endeavour will be more to excite a desire for repentance than a fear of judgment. Profiting by his accurate experience and intimate knowledge of human nature, he will address himself chiefly to the heart; and hard indeed must be that heart which he shall fail to move! For in discourses, apparently the most general, there shall not be a conscience among his hearers which does not discover some warning, some suggestion, or some reproof addressed to itself in particular. So nicely adjusted also will be the language in which he conveys his instruction, that the lettered man shall admit that he has never before so clearly understood the Scripture which he has heard explained, and the unlettered shall go to his home with the profitable conviction that he has not been listening to a formal preachment, but rather to the affectionate advice of a father who has been talking to his children.*

In his intercourse with other men, the same

* To this might be added a perfection of voice which has been exactly described by Cicero in speaking of the Catuli.—
"Sonus erat dulcis: literæ neque expressæ, neque oppressæ, ne aut obscurum esset, aut putidum. Sine contentione vox nec languens, nec canora."

suavity of manners, the same unpretending meekness which has marked him while in possession of no more than an honourable competency, will accompany him, if he should be exalted even to affluence and rank. So far from striving after worldly honours, he will perhaps put aside dignities, not only within his attainment, but urged upon him by those who justly believe that they cannot be better filled; and this refusal will spring not from pride which seeks to create a false opinion that he disdains eminent station, but from humility which deems itself unequal to support it, and from a contentedness of spirit, over which ambition has no power. Thus having used life, he will have no farther preparation to make for that great change, to meet the coming of which every hour has been employed. On the past he will look back with gratitude to God for the opportunities of doing good which have been permitted him, and to the future he will look forward with humble hope, that, through the blood of his Redeemer, his record may not be without acceptance. This tranquil remembrance, and these joyous anticipations, will smooth the pillow of sickness and infirmity; so that he will teach all who approach him in what manner a Christian is able to die;* till, when *all things are ready*, and his final summons is issued, per-

* Addison to Lord Warwick,—“ I have sent for you, that you may see how a Christian can die.”

haps because it pleases God to show to those from whom he is taken away some earnest of the blessedness to which we are permitted to believe the good man is translated, he will gently fall asleep, as if Death had no sting.

If you have ever known such a man as I have here, most feebly and inadequately, attempted to pourtray, it is impossible but that you must have loved and revered him. If you have lost such a man, bitterly in your hearts must you lament his departure. If you have duly valued him, the excellence of his example, no less than the holy precepts which you have so often caught from his lips, will be your study, your consolation, and your guide. Such a one *I* have known from my earliest childhood. Such a one *I* have lost, mature in years, and ripe indeed for his reward, but, alas! too early for all who loved him. Such a man, I trust in God, I have not undervalued. To attain the brightness of that pattern which his life exhibited were almost a hopeless wish; but if I can frame a prayer more fervent than any which has hitherto passed my lips, it is that I may die his death, and that my last end may be like his.

A
SERMON,
&c.

